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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0058

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE

RUEAHND/COMJTF-B SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE 0210

RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

RUEAHND/CDRJTFB SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RULGPSU/COMSOC SOUTH IMMEDIATE

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 1082

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEGUCIGALPA 000555

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/07/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAS COUP SITREP #13 07/07/2009 AS OF 1530

LOCAL (1730 EDT)

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 532

[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 535

[1](#)C. TEGUCIGALPA 544

[1](#)D. TEGUCIGALPA 543

[1](#)E. STATE 69221

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Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

Protests Throughout Country; Vandalism on the Rise

[1](#)1. (C) National press carried prominent stories of President Zelaya's meeting today with the Secretary. The Ambassador spoke to President Zelaya Monday night (Ref A), and President Zelaya thanked the Ambassador for USG support and said he strongly supported a multilateral approach to promote a national dialogue mediated by President Arias. He said he hoped this process was also supported by the UN and the OAS to deal with the crisis.

[1](#)2. (C) About 3,000 Zelaya supporters (reportedly the "Bloque Popular" (Popular Block) group and teachers unions) organized again today at 0800 (1000 EDT) at the National Autonomous University and marched to the offices of the Honduran National Private Enterprise Council (COHEP). The group then proceeded to the Embassy, where they remained outside the Consular Section for approximately one hour then left peacefully at approximately 1300 local. Honduran First Lady Xiomara Castro de Zelaya spoke to the crowd that congregated at the Embassy. She reportedly made the following statement to the crowd in Spanish: she supports her husband, President Zelaya, and she is conscious of the fact that there will be elections as stipulated by law and that President Zelaya will not stay in power even one more day more than permitted. She expressed her condolences to the family of the young man killed at Toncontin Airport on Sunday and that he is a martyr in the popular fight. The First Lady expressed her appreciation for the support of Secretary Clinton and noted that all the countries of the OAS supported President Zelaya. She concluded by expressing her appreciation to the Embassy for their good work during this crisis. From the Embassy, the pro-Zelaya group moved to the Public Ministry building in

Tegucigalpa and at 1405 local, the group dispersed peacefully. Following the demonstration at the Embassy at approximately 1300 local, graffiti was discovered near the consular entrance to Embassy that reads in Spanish, "The CIA is behind the coup." The Consular section resumed normal operations.

13. (U) A separate pro-Zelaya demonstration by a feminist group gathered today at the UN building at 0900 local (1100 EDT) and dispersed peacefully by 1100 local (1300 EDT). One Mission contractor attempting to reach San Pedro Sula overland reported a peaceful pro-Zelaya roadblock prevented them from reaching Comayagua on the main CA5 highway at approximately 1100 local (1300 EDT).

14. (U) Micheletti supporters plan to meet in central parks throughout the country today. Yesterday, the Tegucigalpa Chamber of Commerce sent invitations to its contacts calling them to a gathering, "in the defense of democracy," today at 1100 local (1300 EDT) in the central park of Tegucigalpa. The invitation invited all businesses and their employees to attend. At 1100 local, there were a reported 4,000 protesters in Tegucigalpa's central park. By 1315 local, the group had dispersed peacefully. Demonstrations from both sides are expected to occur throughout the week.

15. (C) Reports indicate further damage due to Sunday's protests at Toncontin Airport include broken windows and other vandalism at a Popeye's fast food restaurant near the airport (Ref A and E). La Tribuna, a national circulation daily newspaper published in Tegucigalpa, reports that early July 6, an explosive device detonated in the local Liberal Party offices in Comayagua. No injuries were reported. The home of Liberal Congressman Valentin Suarez Osejo was also

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damaged by the explosion and graffiti personally insulting the Congressman was found. This incident follows Suarez's public support for the Micheletti regime. Pro-Zelaya demonstration organizer Rafael Alegria was quoted in an AP news story this morning as saying Zelaya supporters would take their fight nationwide by blocking major highways and border crossings in an effort to impede trucks delivering fuel and merchandise.

16. (SBU) The curfew for tonight is reportedly from 22:30 to 04:30 (00:30 to 06:30 EDT). Honduran National Police (HNP) report that 824 arrests have been made for curfew violations since June 28. Embassy arranged with local police officials to allow Post's private contract security service to respond to Mission residences in emergency cases and only with HNP escort.

Political Developments; Public Opinion

17. (SBU) The de facto regime's Foreign Minister, Enrique Ortiz Colindres, has on at least two occasions made racially derogatory slurs about President Obama. The Ambassador expressed outrage about these disrespectful comments in the press as personally insulting and insulting to the American people. Furthermore, the Ambassador asked his country team to express the Embassy's outrage to their contacts about Ortiz's irresponsible comments.

18. (C) Human Rights NGOs reporting alleged violations by the Honduran military continue to allege that their electronic communications are being blocked. Poloff has experienced delays in receiving information from the groups. Javier Hall, a Liberal Congressman who has publicly denounced the June 28 coup, reports that two known assassins (Nelson Martinez and Jose Carlos Garcia) have been following him on orders of Roberto Micheletti. The two were implicated in a clash with student protesters in El Progreso last week at which Hall alleges he was assaulted by soldiers. While most

television stations and radio programs have returned to the airwaves, reports of media intimidation by the military continue to surface, and self-censorship is evident.

¶9. (C) Congress plans to resume today at 1400 local time (1600 EDT) for the first time since June 28 (Note: sessions are notorious for commencing many hours later than scheduled. End note). Some members are considering attending the session and denouncing on the floor of the Congress the expulsion of President Zelaya. However, several fear for their physical safety and political careers if they do so. The Ambassador offered to meet with the dissident members of Congress immediately after the session. As of 13:30 local, Embassy has not received word on how they intend to proceed.

¶10. (C) Exiled Minister of Finance Rebecca Santos remains outside Honduras. A World Bank official who remains in contact with her told EconCouns July 6 that she planned to seek political asylum, possibly in Guatemala. The World Bank official speculated that Santos feared she would be prosecuted for failing to present a budget to Congress as required by the Constitution and the Budget Law, which contains stiff penalties for the Finance Minister for failing to comply.

¶11. (C) USAID Director met yesterday with the G-16 donor partners, Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga, and Presidential candidates Porfirio Lobo Sosa (National Party) and Elvin Santos (Liberal Party). The Cardinal declined the proposal by other donor countries that he act as mediator of the crisis. Santos expressed his desire for a multilateral approach to find a solution to the crisis but indicated his belief that involvement should be limited only to countries of Central America.

Infrastructure and Communications

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¶12. (U) Airport officials confirmed this morning that Toncontin Airport in Tegucigalpa remained closed today. Previous announcements indicated the closure would last through Friday July 10, however there are unconfirmed reports that Toncontin Airport will be open Wednesday and the Civair director announced on the radio around 12:30 local that the airport had been reopened as of Tuesday afternoon. San Pedro Sula airport remains open for international flights, and American, Continental and Delta airlines continue to operate flights as usual to and from that destination. All land borders are reportedly open to both private and commercial traffic.

¶13. (U) As of Tuesday morning, there are no/no reports of public utility outages in the country.

Consular and Embassy Operations

¶14. (U) Due to the purported closure of Tegucigalpa's Toncontin airport through Friday July 10, the Embassy's Management office is developing a policy to support official air travel via San Pedro Sula and provide over land transportation to Tegucigalpa. DAO transported a family to San Pedro Sula for PCS air travel to US and reported no major obstacles driving from Tegucigalpa to San Pedro Sula. With the daily permission of the base commander and the Ambassador, JFT-Bravo will resume training flights on a case-by-case basis. The purpose of these flights is only to maintain the minimal training requirements for the flight crews and requires no/no contact with Honduran military counterparts.

¶15. (U) The Embassy is open for all regular consular services

today, July 7. Barring a change in the security situation, the consular section plans to be open for regular consular services tomorrow, July 8. The Consular section's F-77 report listing all American Citizens in the consular district is up-to-date. Embassy will continue to operate with a liberal leave policy in place for employees who are impeded or feel unsafe getting to the Embassy.

¶16. (U) The Consular Section has received welfare and whereabouts inquiries on more than 600 Amcits to date via telephone and email and report handling over 150 phone inquiries Monday. Post issued a new warden message last night and will be preparing one this afternoon as well. Consular Section continues to regularly update ACS talking points on the Embassy website, and has advised Amcits to abide by the curfew.

¶17. (SBU) Another EAC will take place tomorrow at 1400 local time (1600 EDT). The EAC will again review civil unrest tripwires to aid in determining the need to request Authorized Departure.
LLORENS